

## **BENCHMARK for CL 28 (Probation Officer)**

### **Representative Duties**

Conducts investigations and prepares reports for the court with recommendations for sentencing of individuals convicted of federal offenses. The preparation of these reports requires interviewing offenders and their families, investigating the offense, prior record and financial status of the offender, and contacting law enforcement agencies, attorneys, victims of the crimes, schools, churches, and civic organizations. The purpose of these activities is to ascertain the offender's background, to assess the probability of future criminal behavior and determine profit from the offense, restitution, and the offender's ability to pay fines and costs of prosecution, incarceration and cost of supervision. An integral part of this process is the interpretation and application of the U.S. Sentencing Commission guidelines and relevant case law.

Following disclosure of the presentence report to the parties, analyzes any objections and determines appropriate course of action. Such actions include resolving disputed issues and/or presenting unresolved issues to the court for resolution.

Presents presentence report and sentencing recommendations to the court. Responds to judicial officer's request for information and advice. Testifies in court as to the basis for factual findings and guideline applications. Serves as resource to the court to facilitate proper imposition of sentence.

Supervises offenders to maximize adherence to imposed conditions, reduce risk to the community, and to provide correctional treatment.

Maintains personal contact with offenders through office and community visits and by telephone. Investigates employment, sources of income, life style and associates to assess risk and compliance. Responsible for detection of substance abuse and through assessment and counseling implements the necessary treatment or violation proceedings of appropriate offenders. Refers offenders to appropriate outside agencies such as medical and drug treatment facilities, employment and training.

Initiates contacts with, replies to and seeks information from organizations and persons such as the U.S. Parole Commission, Bureau of Prisons, and attorneys concerning offenders' behavior and conditions of supervision. Detects and investigates violations and implements appropriate alternatives and sanctions. Reports violations of the conditions of supervision to the appropriate authorities. Prepares reports, which may include application of U.S. Sentencing Commission revocation guidelines. Makes recommendations for disposition. Testifies at court or parole hearings.

Conducts preliminary interviews and other investigations as required.

Maintains a detailed written record of case activity.

**Factor 1, Job Requirements:**

Broad knowledge of criminal justice system. Thorough knowledge of federal probation and parole legal requirements, policies and procedures. Thorough knowledge of sentencing guidelines and applicable case law. Thorough knowledge of investigative and supervision techniques. Good knowledge of the roles, responsibilities and relationships among the federal courts, Parole Commission, and the Bureau of Prisons. Broad knowledge of community and available community resources. Ability to work with law enforcement agencies at different governmental levels, community service providers, and all courts. Skill in applying various statutes and implementing regulations. Ability to communicate orally and in writing with a variety of persons such as judicial officers, attorneys and offenders. Ability to interview and investigate offenders from various backgrounds, their families and others in the community to obtain the information needed. Skill in supervising offenders, including investigating their finances and determining the legitimacy of their income. Skill in risk assessment, developing appropriate alternatives and sanctions to non-compliant behavior. Skill in counseling offenders to obtain and maintain compliance to the conditions of their release. Ability to discern deception and act accordingly.

**Factor 2, Scope and Effect of Work:**

The incumbent's work assists the court in making sentencing decisions. Proper sentencing minimizes the number of persons incarcerated while maximizing the protection of the public. Incumbent's supervision of offenders has direct impact on the safety of the community, the rehabilitation of the offender and the restitution of the victim. Society benefits from successful supervision by saving the costs of incarceration. Often the offender completes the conditions of supervision and becomes a productive member of the community.

**Factor 3, Complexity:**

Preparing presentence reports is a complicated process which includes gathering and analyzing information and formulating a recommendation. Interpreting and applying the sentencing guidelines is very complex. Changes in legislation and case law require continual updating of procedures. Supervising offenders is difficult. Identifying relevant supervision issues, developing a plan to address the issues and implementing the appropriate plan is a complex process. Staying abreast of available community resources and their referral requirements and procedures also is difficult. Supervising offenders with substance abuse, physical or mental problems and those convicted of sophisticated financial crimes is difficult. These duties are increased in difficulty when offenders are being deceitful of the incumbent and others.

**Factor 4, Work Parameters:**

The procedures are established and the supervisor is available for discussion of unusual problems. However, frequently critical case decisions are made in the community without access to supervisory guidance. The incumbent usually schedules and completes the work independently, ensuring that required deadlines are met. Completed work, such as presentence reports and supervision plans, is reviewed by the supervisor. Judgment and experience are applied in making decisions, in addition to use of written guides and manuals.

**Factor 5, Personal Interactions:**

Regular contacts are made with judicial officers, attorneys, law enforcement and other court personnel in preparation of presentence reports and supervision of offenders. Frequent contacts with offenders are to gather information on the offenders' backgrounds in relation to criminal activity, employment status, and related information. Community and family contacts are made for the same reasons. Regularly scheduled contacts are made with offenders and others to monitor compliance with supervision. Community service agencies are routinely contacted to arrange for offender's needs in such areas as health care and employment.

**Factor 6, Environmental Demands:**

Work requires daily contact with persons with known violent backgrounds. Frequent travel and contacts are in unsafe neighborhoods where drug dealing and violence occur regularly.